Sanitized Copy Approved for Release 2010/08/27 : CIA-RDP90-00552R000505120092-9

STAT

4

ARTICLE APPEARED
ON PAGE 7

NEW YORK POST
9 February 1983

RON BLOWS STACK AT CIA OVER POPE PROBE FOULUP

STAT

Tells agency boss to 'get to bottom' of Red link to plot

By NILES LATHEM, *Bureau Chief*

WASHINGTON — President Reagan, furious at the recent performance of the CIA, has called Director William Casey on the carpet over the agency's failure to investigate Soviet and Bulgarian links to the plot to assassinate the Pope, The Post has learned.

Top White House aides said last night that Reagan was "enraged" on reading recent reports that CIA stations in Europe are not pursuing the unfolding drama — and are actually trying to discourage the probe.

Last week Reagan ordered Casey to get down to business and get to the bottom of the mystery.

In handing down the order, Reagan sided with hardliners on the National Security Council who believe the CIA is being run by "a bunch of liberals."

The same people also tried to discourage a U.S. probe into the Soviet use of chemical weapons in Asia, White House aides said.

Reagan also went against the advice of advisers who believe the U.S. should stay out of the probe so as not to jeapordize plans for a summit meeting with Soviet strongman Yuri Andropov

White House aides said last night the failure of the CIA to pursue the case is just one example of a much larger problem with the secret government operation.

Hardliners on the National Security Council believe the CIA is being run by a "bunch of bureaucratic liberals," and that the conservative Casey can't control them.

These officials noted that CIA analysts, whom they would not name, have discouraged numerous probes of Soviet behavior for fear it would antagonize the Kremlin.

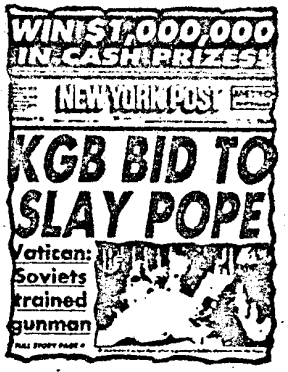
For example, it is recalled that the CIA for four years blocked the U.S. investigation of the Soviet use of lethal "Yellow Rain" chemicals — even though there is now irrefutable evidence collected by the State Dept. proving that the chemical weapon was used in Afghanistan, Laos and Kampuchea.

"The same people who are responsible for the Yellow Rain Gap are responsible for the Pope Gap," said a knowledgable source.

Other officials close to the intelligence community said the reasons for the failure of the CIA to get out front on these issues may not be ideological — but a confession of incompetence.

These officials believe there has been a lack of adequate field work by the CIA, and that analysts in Washington are trying to cover for the field agents by pouring cold water on the information in front of White House officials.

Sen. Alfonse D'Amato, who is in Europe investigating the plot to kill the Pope also has criticized the CIA, calling its agents "shockingly inept."



FLASHBACK: How The Post broke the story in Sept., 1981

Sanitized Copy Approved for Release 2010/08/27 : CIA-RDP90-00552R000505120092-9